

10.904—Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention—and is subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with state and local officials.”)

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Forest Service

Snoqualmie Pass Adaptive Management Area Plan, Wenatchee National Forest, Kittitas County Washington and Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, King County, Washington

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The USDA-Forest Service, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to develop and evaluate a range of alternatives for management of the 212,700 acres in the Snoqualmie Pass Adaptive Management Area (AMA), as directed by the April 13, 1994 Record of Decision (ROD) for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl. This area is located within both the Cle Elum Ranger District of the Wenatchee National Forest in Kittitas County, and the North Bend Ranger District of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest in King County.

The alternatives will be consistent with the emphasis direction as described in the ROD, which is the “Development and implementation, with the participation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, of a scientifically credible, comprehensive plan for providing late-successional forest on the “checkerboard” lands”. This forest Service proposal is scheduled for completion no later than December 1995.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope and implementation of this proposal must be received by February 20, 1995.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions and comments about this EIS should be directed to Floyd J. Rogalski, Project Planner, Cle Elum Ranger District, 803 West Second Street, Cle Elum, Washington 98922; Phone 509-674-4411, ext. 315.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Forest Service is initiating this action in response to the Snoqualmie Pass AMA emphasis direction, on page D-16 of the ROD for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management

Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl.

The Snoqualmie Pass AMA is a 212,700 acre portion of the North Cascades east of North Bend and west Cle Elum, along Interstate 90. Most of the AMA is within the Wenatchee National Forest. The western portion is within the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. The vegetation in the area varies from cool, moist forest on the westside of the crest to drier, more fire prone forest on the eastside. The most defining characteristic of this AMA is its checkerboard ownership.

Approximately every other square mile is privately owned, even though it is within the National Forest boundary.

Issues that have been identified to date include: (1) Provision of late-successional forest and connectivity in an area where much of the land belongs to private companies; (2) the fact that the I-90 highway corridor acts as a barrier to the movement of plants and animals; (3) the need to create an environment where communities and agencies can work together to develop an innovative management approach.

The proposed action is to adopt the Standards and Guidelines for the Late-Successional Reserves and Riparian Reserves from the ROD for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl.

The plan will focus on Late-successional characteristics and riparian guidelines, deferring to the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie and Wenatchee Land and Resource Management Plans on other issues such as recreation and wilderness management. The decision to be made is what standards and guidelines, if any, to adopt for the management of late-successional and riparian habitat in the Snoqualmie Pass Adaptive Management Area.

Alternatives to the proposed action that we have identified at this time include: (1) No Action; and (2) Developing another scientifically credible plan(s) that meets the emphasis of the Snoqualmie Pass Adaptive Management Area. Other alternatives will be developed in response to issues identified during the scoping process for the EIS. All alternatives will need to respond to specific conditions in the Snoqualmie Pass area.

Public participation will be especially important at several points during the analysis. The Forest Service will be seeking information, comments, and assistance from Federal, State, and local agencies, and other individuals or organizations who may be interested in

or affected by the proposed action. The scoping process includes:

1. Identifying potential issues;
2. Identifying issues to be analyzed in depth;
3. Eliminating insignificant issues or those which have been covered by a relevant previous environmental process;
4. Exploring and identifying additional alternatives.
5. Identifying potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives (i.e. direct, indirect, and cumulative effects and connected actions); and
6. Determining potential cooperating agencies and task assignments.

Public meetings will be held in both eastern and western Washington. Notice of meeting dates and locations will be published in the newspapers of record for the Wenatchee and Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forests. These include the Seattle Post-intelligencer, Wenatchee World, and Yakima Herald Republic. The February 15th meeting will be a Scientist's Forum and will focus on scientific aspects of the AMA. The scoping meetings are planned to be held as follows.

January 31, 1995—7 to 9 p.m., North Bend Ranger Station, 42404 SE North Bend Way, North Bend, WA, Phone: 202-888-1421

February 9, 1995—7 to 9 p.m., Cle Elum Ranger Station, 803 West Second St., Cle Elum, WA, Phone: 509-674-4411

February 8, 1995—7 to 9 p.m., White River Ranger Station, 857 Roosevelt Ave. East, Enumclaw, WA, Phone: 206-825-6585

February 15, 1995—10 a.m. to 3 p.m., North Bend Ranger Station, 42404 SE North Bend Way, North Bend, WA, Phone: 206-888-1421.

The draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public review by October 1995. At that time, copies of the draft EIS will be distributed to interested and affected agencies, organizations, and members of the public for their review and comment. The comment period on the draft EIS will be 45 days from the date of the EPA Notice of Availability as published in the **Federal Register**. It is very important that those interested in the management of the Wenatchee and the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forests participate at that time.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying the considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft EIS should be as specified as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or

chapters of the draft EIS. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft EIS or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the statement. (Reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points).

The Forest Service believes it is important to give reviewers notice at this early stage of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of a draft EIS must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts an agency to the reviewer's position and contentions. *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519, 553 (1978). Also, environmental objections that could be raised at the draft EIS stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final EIS may be waived or dismissed by the courts. *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, 803 F.2d 1016, 1022 (9th Cir. 1986) and *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris*, 490 F.Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). Because of these court rulings, it is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate by the close of the comment period so that substantive comments and objections are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully consider them and respond to them in the final EIS. To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft EIS should be specified as possible.

The final EIS is scheduled to be completed in December 1995. In the final EIS, the Forest Service is required to respond to comments and responses received during the comment period that pertain to the environmental consequences discussed in the draft EIS and applicable laws, regulations, and policies considered in making the decision regarding this proposal. Sonny O'Neal, Forest Supervisor, Wenatchee National Forest and Dennis Bschor, Forest Supervisor, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest are the responsible officials. As responsible officials they will document the decision and reasons for the decision in the Record of Decision. That decision will be subject to Forest Service appeal regulations (36 CFR Part 217).

Dated: January 25, 1995.

Sonny O'Neal,

Forest Supervisor, Wenatchee National Forest.

Dated: January 26, 1995.

Dennis E. Bschor,

Forest Supervisor, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

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Opportunity To Comment on the Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement To Salvage Fire-Killed Timber on the Almanor Ranger District, Lassen National Forest

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement for the Barkley Fire Salvage.

SUMMARY: The Department of Agriculture, Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement for a proposal to salvage approximately 2.6 million board feet (MMBF) of fire killed timber on 250 acres within the 44,000 acres burned by the Barkley Fire during September 1994 on the Lassen National Forest, Almanor Ranger District, Tehama County, California. The proposed project area is bordered by private timber land on the north, Deer Creek Canyon on the east, and the Ishi Wilderness to the west. The legal description is Sections 5, 6, 9, and 19 of T.26N., R.3E. M.D.M. The decision to be made is whether to salvage fire-killed timber from the Barkley Fire as proposed, and what mitigation measures will be in effect.

DATES: Written comments concerning the scope of the analysis and significant issues should be received by March 6, 1995.

ADDRESSES: Send comments about the proposed action and scope of the analysis to: Michael R. Williams, District Ranger, Almanor Ranger District, P.O. Box 767, Chester, California 96020.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Phil Tuma, District Forest Land Manager, Almanor Ranger District, P.O. Box 767, Chester, California 96020, (916) 258-2141.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The proposed fire salvage areas are within the former Polk Springs Roadless Area, which was released to non-wilderness management by the California Wilderness Act of 1984. The Lassen National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) was completed in 1993. The management direction in the LRMP for the proposed

salvage area has management prescriptions of timber and semi-primitive non-motorized.

The proposal is whether or not to implement restoration projects on 250 acres within the Lower Deer Creek Management Area, including salvage timber harvest, fuels treatments and reforestation activities to restore the area to its natural vegetation type, and reduce fuel loading and the associated risk for future catastrophic intensity fires.

Public participation will be especially important at several points during the analysis. The first point is during the scoping process (40 CFR 1501.7). The Forest Service will be seeking information, comments and assistance from Federal, State, and local agencies and other individuals or organizations who may be interested in affected by the proposed action. This input will be used in the preparation of the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS).

The scoping process includes:

1. Identifying potential issues.
2. Eliminating insignificant issues or those which have been covered by a relevant previous environmental analysis.
3. Exploring additional alternatives.
4. Identifying potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives.
5. Determining potential cooperating agencies and task assignments.

A public field trip to the proposed project area will be announced to the public to discuss issues, alternatives, and mitigations.

The following preliminary issues and alternatives have been developed.

Issues

(1) Timber harvesting and road construction create soil disturbance which may result in stream sedimentation. Sedimentation may affect water quality, anadromous fisheries habitat, and other aquatic resources. These activities may contribute to existing cumulative watershed effects, occurring from preceding fire impacts and recent salvage logging on private land.

(2) Salvage logging and associated road construction activities could affect the roadless characteristics of the area.

(3) Untreated excess fuels could increase the risk of another catastrophic fire that would damage or destroy resource values on public and private land.

(4) Vegetative biodiversity, viability, and recovery rates may be affected by the proposed projects.

Alternatives

(1) No Action. No timber salvage or restoration activities are proposed.

(2) This alternative proposes to salvage approximately 2.6 MMBF of fire